

CONFERENCE *connection*

Alabama • Georgia • Mississippi
South Carolina • Tennessee • NW Florida

SOUTHEAST UCC Conference



March 15, 2016

Jottings from June

I was in worship with Pilgrimage United Church of Christ in Marietta, Georgia on March 13. Rev. Rod Mundy-Haase, ONA Coordinator for the Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC, was the speaker and then led an informational program on a new ecumenical program that is being introduced for the "inclusive church." Pilgrimage is beginning plans for their 20th anniversary of voting to become an ONA congregation in the United Church of Christ.



As I sat in worship, I was noticing the pair of Lenten banners in the sanctuary. The one to my left showed hills and a roadway and a river leading to a palm branch at the right edge. The banner to my right had a palm branch at the left edge and then images of nails, a beam, and a crown of thorns. I found the images powerful and provocative. As I thought more about why they were so compelling, I realized that the journey of ministry in the Conference was illustrated by these banners.

We have indeed been on a journey for the last two years. And I have often prayed out of the Psalms to lift my eyes to the hills from whence my help comes. And we are always reminded that we have our life in our relationship to the Divine through Jesus Christ as we are baptized and join Christ at the open table. The other banner reminded me that we have a history as a community and that this year we celebrate that history even as those gathered in that upper room were remembering their history of salvation and God's provision for their lives as a community of faith.

But even in the midst of the triumphant celebration of our life together and the mission we are called to, we know that changes are on the horizon. We are already experiencing loss in our Southeast community. And there are leadership changes coming in the next year. What lessons can we take from the story of this community that found a way to new life and renewed mission even after hard and shocking changes. I take great comfort in the assurance that we have as we celebrate new life on Easter Sunday. We know that we serve a living God and that we are given the guidance we need to engage in the ministry to which we are called. As long as we remain focused on the example of Jesus and his ministry and trust that God and the Spirit will provide the resources and the guidance, we have nothing to fear and everything to be thankful for. The crown of thorns in the banner was in gold metallic fabric and also reminded me of the sun, the new light in our lives, the Son of God who came to be among us in all our joys and struggles. I

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Coming Events

Application Deadline for Conference Grants
Fri, March 18, 2016

Executive Committee
Tue, March 22, 2016
Web Meeting

Board of Directors
Tue, March 22, 2016
Web Meeting

Office Closed for Good Friday
Fri, March 25, 2016

Commission on Ministry Meeting
Sat, April 2, 2016
Chattanooga, TN

SEC Staff Meeting

pray Easter blessings for each of you and all the congregations that are a part of the ministry of the Southeast Conference as we continue to seek to serve faithfully.

Thu, April 7, 2016
Conference Office

From the Conference Office

Spring 2016 Conference Grants due March 18

January 18 through March 18, 2016 marks the next application cycle for "Transforming Churches, Transforming Lives" Conference grants.



During this time congregations may apply in 3 different ways:

1. Online at secucc.org/giving/capital-campaign-grant-application/
2. Mailing a paper application to the Southeast Conference office
3. Emailing an electronic application to dspearman@secucc.org

The deadline for this round of grants is Friday, March 18.

Church Annual Reports

A big thank you to all the churches who completed their annual reports. We had good participation and hope to be awarded one of the incentives for continuing to improve our reporting percentages. All this information will appear in the 2015 UCC Yearbook. Some of our financial commitments are calculated based on the information published in the yearbook so we are grateful for your efforts to ensure that we have accurate data for this Conference.

A statistical analysis of the 2014 reports indicate that the Southeast Conference is the third largest geographic area among the 38 UCC Conferences. We are fifth lowest in number of churches and Our Churches Wider Mission Giving and sixth lowest in total membership. We are seeking data on our per capita giving to see how we rank within the UCC.



We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2016. Each month, we will publish a weekly list for the month and post them weekly on our Facebook page. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

- [Click here to download the entire 2016 prayer list](#)

Highlights:

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Connect with Us!



- Prayers for Sandy Creek UCC in Lafayette, Alabama as they mourn the loss of **John Keith Smith**, known to the church community as "Coach." He was found dead in his home on March 3 and the death is being treated as a homicide.
- Prayers for **Rev. Bob Hurst**, United Church of Huntsville who has recovered from hip surgery and is scheduled for a knee replacement March 28.
- Prayers for **Rev. Laurie Hill** as she recovers from surgery. She is serving Fairfield Glade Community Church in Tennessee.
- Continued prayers for **Rev. Michael McCaulley**, Peace Church, Clemson South Carolina as he continues treatment for a bone marrow transplant at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston.

Churches in Transition:

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Church of the Savior, Alpharetta Georgia; Pensacola UCC, Pensacola Florida; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Beloved Community, Birmingham Alabama; First United Church, Belvidere Tennessee.

News from Around the Conference and Beyond

Ordination of Katie O'Dunne

Kirkwood UCC and the Southeast Conference invite you to the ordination and installation of Katie O'Dunne. The service will be held on Saturday, April 9, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in the Gresham Chapel of Woodward Academy (1662 Rugby Avenue, College Park, GA 30337). A reception will follow the service. An electronic offering will be taken to support the Leadership Development Fund of the Southeast Conference United Church of Christ: www.gofundme.com/ktordination. Note to clergy: robes and stoles optional.

End Racism Day at Columbia Museum of Art

March 21 is End Racism Day, officially observed since 1966 by the United Nations as The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Columbia Museum of Art is excited to partner with the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission, which is taking the lead to promote End Racism Day for the first time in our state. Join Chief Curator Will South at 4:00 p.m. for a tour of art that examines discrimination and stereotypes, followed by a panel discussion on racism with moderator Beryl Dakers of SCETV at 5:00 p.m.

Camp Beech Grove Returns this Summer to Central UCC in Atlanta

Camp Beech Grove welcomes children who want to connect with each other and nature, learn about the outdoor world in which they live, and have time to play in the forest. The small camp (max. 24) offers young children opportunities to play in and learn about the forest and its habitats. [Read more...](#)

Richshanda's story: from a flooded home to a changed life

The national United Church of Christ recently highlighted how the Disaster Recovery Support Initiative of the UCC helped a South

Carolina woman after the severe flooding in October 2015. Although not mentioned in the article, our very own Garden of Grace UCC was instrumental in the recovery efforts and assistance to Richshanda. [Read more...](#)

New Associate Minister at Kirkwood UCC

Kirkwood UCC in Atlanta is pleased to announce that Charmaine Penn Johnson will be joining the eight year old congregation as their first ever Associate Minister. She recently served as Assistant Pastor at Victory for the World in Stone Mountain and currently serves as the co-chair of the African American Women in Ministry group of the United Church of Christ. [Read more...](#)

Job Opportunities

Associate Minister at Central Congregational UCC in Atlanta

Central Congregational United Church of Christ, a 400-member Open & Affirming, Justice & Peace Seeking progressive Christian congregation is seeking an Associate Minister to join the ministry team. Successful candidates will have a strong commitment to progressive Christianity and considerable experience in justice & peace-seeking advocacy. The likely ministry portfolio will include Mission & Action and the Board of Christian Education; although, the Council seeks the "right match" with the Senior Minister to facilitate the growth and nurturance of the congregation and the portfolio is flexible. [Read more...](#)

Music Ministry Positions at Church of the Savior, UCC in Knoxville

Church of the Savior, UCC, in Knoxville, TN, a progressive, open and affirming congregation, is seeking two positions (or perhaps one combined position):

- Pianist/Organist, with the responsibility for accompanying all church worship services, choir events, special services. This person will also consult with the Music Director in the selection of organ/piano music for the service. Salary is \$8,500/year.
- Music Director, with the responsibility for choir leadership. A successful candidate must be familiar with sacred and secular music in a wide range of styles, plan and coordinate the music program with the Pastor and the Worship Committee, and demonstrate expertise in conducting a choir. Salary is \$11,500/year.

The congregation is also open to the possibility of a combined position of Music Director/Organist/Pianist with a salary of \$18,000 to \$20,000 per year.

If interested and for more details, please send a cover letter and a CV with references to Rev. John Gill at cosjg@att.net.

Conferences and Learning Opportunities

UCC Clergywomen Leadership Conference

MESA is hosting "Preparing For, Stepping Into, and Sustaining Our Leadership Moments: A UCC Clergywomen Leadership Conference" on April 18-20, 2016 at Carefree Resort and

Conference Center in Carefree, AZ. This event will feature keynote presentations from the 2015 Antoinette Brown Award Recipients the Rev. Traci Blackmon, the Rev. Sharon Ellis Davis, and the Rev. Martha Spong. [Read more...](#)

Bi-Vocational Ministry in the 21st Century

Professional Church Leaders (PCL), an annual convening of ecumenical denominational leaders, is pleased to announce that it will host a conference, "Bi-Vocational Ministry in the 21st Century," April 15-16, 2016 at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simon's Island, Georgia. This conference is designed for bi-vocational ministers and for governing body and judicatory executives, with workshops and keynotes at a beautiful location. [Read more...](#)

Healthy Boundaries for Clergy and Church Leaders

The Southeast Conference, in partnership with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia, are pleased to offer two Healthy Boundaries training sessions for clergy and church leaders. The first is April 23 in Atlanta. [Read more...](#)

"Live & Learn" Lunches @ TACC

Every third Tuesday of the Month from 11:30 to 1:00 join TACC staff and community experts for lunch, and to learn more about how to explore life's difficult conversations and challenging situations. April 19: Spirituality in All of Life's Stages. The Continuum of Spirituality in All of Life's Phases and Stages. [Read more...](#)